

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
*Jeff Regnart, Director*



Contact:  
Thomas Sheridan, Seine Area Management Biologist  
Jeremy Botz, Gillnet Area Management Biologist  
Amanda Wiese, Assistant Area Management Biologist  
Phone: (907) 424-3212 Fax: (907) 424-3235

Prince William Sound Area Office  
401 Railroad Avenue, PO Box 669  
Cordova, AK 99574-0669

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #16

**GILLNET FISHERIES:** Deep gear will be permitted in the Coghill, Eshamy, Montague, and Unakwik districts starting on Monday, July 2.

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 2 for a 48-hour period. An aerial survey of the Bering River District was conducted yesterday under generally poor conditions. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week.

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 2 for a 48-hour period. Waters within the king salmon inside closure area, as described in 5 AAC 24.350(1)(B), will be OPEN during this period. The cumulative sonar count to date is 815,578 fish whereas the minimum anticipated count to date is 479,648 fish. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 36-hour period that started on Thursday, June 28 was 100 king, 79,700 sockeye, and 1,100 chum salmon. This compares to an anticipated harvest of 40 king and 40,900 sockeye salmon for this period. The Gulkana Hatchery sockeye salmon harvest contribution from the fishing period that closed on June 22 was 34%. For the week ending June 30, the Western Copper River Delta survey count was 5,411 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 4,968 sockeye salmon. Survey conditions on the Eastern Copper River Delta were fair to poor. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown next week.

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for a 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 2 with an additional 84-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest for the period that closed on Wednesday, June 27 was 11,300 chum salmon with 61 deliveries reported.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH THA and SHA, and excluding the Granite Bay, Esther, and Bettles Bay Subdistricts, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 2. Additionally, the Granite Bay and Esther Subdistricts will open for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 2. During this fishing period waters at the mouth of the Coghill River north of a line from 61° 3.36'N., 147°55.53'W. to 61° 4.06'N., 147°56.96'W. are closed. The Bettles Bay Subdistrict is defined as waters west of a line from Point Pigot at 60° 48.21'N., 148°20.90'W to Point Pakenham at 61° 00.45'N., 148°04.85'W. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, June 27 was 216,100 chum and 33,800 sockeye salmon with 735 deliveries reported.

The Coghill weir was fish tight as of 7:30 p.m. June 28. The cumulative passage at the weir through June 29, including estimated counts while the weir was not fully installed, is 326 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated count of 3,715 fish.

Hatchery cost recovery at WNH is complete. As of June 30, PWSAC estimated 105,000-135,000 chum salmon in the WNH SHA for hatchery escapement, which is near the cumulative anticipated goal of 128,000 fish for this date.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District, excluding the AGZ shoreward of a line of buoys in front of the barrier net, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 2. The AGZ up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier seine will open to DRIFT GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period. A 72-hour period is anticipated to begin on Thursday, July 5 at 8:00 am. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, June 27 was 36,400 chum and 160,100 sockeye salmon with 836 deliveries reported.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 2. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour fishing period that closed on Friday, June 29 is 210 sockeye salmon.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** An aerial survey for portions of Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts was conducted on Thursday, June 28. The next aerial survey for portions of Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts is scheduled for the week of July 2. Escapement observations were minimal during last week's survey, and are slightly behind anticipated numbers for the date. VFDA is currently in the process of conducting cost recovery for pink salmon in Port Valdez. Cost recovery pink salmon harvest on Friday, June 29 was approximately 56,000 fish with an average weight of approximately 4.16 pounds per fish and 14% female. Cumulative VFDA cost recovery is approximately 359,000 pounds through June 29, or approximately 8% of a final goal of 4.4 million pounds. It is anticipated that the next PWS purse seine news release will occur at 2 pm on Monday, July 2, with daily news releases occurring thereafter.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** **Waters of the Eastern District are now closed.** The preliminary harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Thursday, June 28 is 1 king, 327 sockeye, 22,321 pink and 3,309 chum salmon with 27 deliveries reported. Time and area for future fishing opportunities in the Eastern District will be dependent upon VFDA cost recovery fishing progress and wild stock escapement indices.

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT:** **Waters of the Southeastern District are now closed.** The preliminary harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Thursday, June 28 is 2,219 sockeye, 46 coho, 1,074 pink and 759 chum salmon with 4 deliveries reported. Time and area for future fishing opportunities in the Southeastern District will be dependent upon wild stock escapement indices.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 2 and an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. The harvest for the 60-hour fishing period that ended on Wednesday, June 27 is confidential.

The waters of Sawmill Bay, including the AFK Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) and Special Harvest Area (SHA), inside of the newly defined THA line from 60° 03.66' N. lat., 147° 59.11' W. long. to 60° 02.77' N. lat., 148° 01.00' W. long. to 60° 02.76' N. lat., 148° 01.66' W. long. will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 2 and an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 5. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 60-hour period that ended on Wednesday, June 27 is 9 king, 9,767 sockeye, 1,727 pink and 9,901 chum salmon with 46 deliveries reported.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

**The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Monday, July 2. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 4.** Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in

the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.